



Ambassadors in Action

Winter 2004 Edition

Ambassadors have been active and great things are happening! Organizations and individuals we've been involved with through an Ambassador Program initiative really value and appreciate you sharing your knowledge and experience. Your commitment and support has allowed the program to respond to an ever-increasing demand for Ambassadors to participate in various events. This issue of *Ambassadors in Action* highlights a few of these initiatives. Thank you to the Ambassadors who shared their stories with us!

MBA Students Get Turned On To Alberta Public Service

By **Rick Duncan**
Planning Analyst
Alberta Municipal Affairs

More than 50 MBA students gave up their lunch hour on February 5th to learn more about working for the Alberta Government. Our Ambassadors told them that some of the benefits of working here included the opportunity to use their education and experience in different ways, the chance to work with excellent people, and the ability to be involved with projects of interest to Albertans.

The idea of holding an event for the MBAs came out of a conversation between Kerri Schlemko and myself. I had met with a student from the University of Calgary to discuss opportunities with the Alberta public service, and during a debriefing conversation with Kerri, I mentioned I was an alumni from the U of A MBA program and asked if there was any way we could use the Ambassador Program to reach these students. She encouraged me to investigate the idea.

After making a few phone calls, I met with Enzo DiCurzio, the Director of the MBA Career Management Services, to discuss the idea of a forum for MBA students. After our initial discussions we decided that the speakers should be MBA alumni who could tell the students about their experience with the public service, and we also decided that the speakers should represent different departments to give the students a broader perspective on opportunities with the Alberta public service. I agreed to recruit the speakers, while DiCurzio

agreed to coordinate marketing of the event as well as the on-site activities.

On February 5th, over 50 MBA students attended the noontime forum. Three former MBA alumni were recruited to make presentations. Kim Graf, a manager with Alberta Justice, spoke enthusiastically about being able to work in an environment with many extraordinary people. Mike Ekelund, an Acting Assistant Deputy Minister with the Department of Energy, gave examples of the projects he was involved in that were currently being written about in newspapers. Ron Muir, a manager with Alberta Infrastructure, discussed how he had been able to successfully use his education to advance within the Alberta public service.

A question and answer session and lunch networking opportunity followed the presentations. A number of students took this opportunity to ask the speakers for more information about certain topics. Gerry Jacubo of Alberta Municipal Affairs, Human Resources and Kathryn Jones of Alberta Infrastructure, Human Resources attended the forum to answer any general recruitment questions. Jacubo also coordinated the catered lunch.

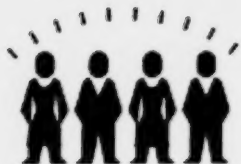
The University of Alberta MBA Forum provided an opportunity for Alberta public service employees to make students aware of opportunities with the Government of Alberta. According to DiCurzio, the forum "was an outstanding success and I had great feedback from the students who really appreciated the opportunity to learn more about public service opportunities."



Ron Muir, Kim Graf and Mike Ekelund



an initiative under the
Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy



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Blueprint For The Future

By **Melissa Schneck**
Human Resource Intern
Alberta Personnel Administration Office

"We need you!" rang out as the Honourable Clint Dunford, Minister of Human Resources and Employment, spoke to close to two thousand Aboriginal Youth from Alberta and the surrounding Provinces and Territories at the Blueprint for the Future career fair. The Honourable Clint Dunford, along with Elders and Leaders from the Aboriginal community, spoke candidly at the opening ceremonies of the career fair about the barriers that Aboriginal youth face in building careers and the need for Aboriginal youth to engage themselves in finding work that they are passionate about.



Carmen Parent, Kerri Schlemko and two career fair participants.

Blueprint for the Future is an Aboriginal Youth career fair that is put on by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. The purpose of the career fair is to provide Aboriginal students with an opportunity to become more informed, and in turn, able to make better choices. The fair reinforces the importance of career planning and educational achievement, provides information about career options and the labour market, provides information about the personal, educational and training requirements for entry into colleges and universities, and provides information about post secondary funding sources and summer job

opportunities. The fair also had exhibit booths, career seminars, a keynote speaker and a town hall forum.

The Alberta public service was fortunate to be represented by fifteen Aboriginal employees from a variety of occupations at the career seminars that took place throughout the day. The career seminars are an opportunity for small groups of students to listen to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals speak about their occupations and personal career paths. The employees representing the Alberta government shared with the students the stories of their personal career paths—what had brought them to work in the Alberta public service, the current work that they do, and the reasons that they feel the Alberta government is a desirable employer.



Carmen Parent, Michelle Steinhauer and Bronwyn Shoush get ready to present.

As an ambassador working the exhibitor booth portion of the career fair, Blueprint for the Future was an absolute pleasure for me to attend. The entire career fair was meticulously planned, with each speaker picked carefully as a role model for the attending students. A strong and clear message was sent about the value of Aboriginal youth to the Aboriginal community and the greater Canadian community. The entire day, especially the willingness of the presenters from the Alberta government to enthusiastically share their stories, was truly inspiring, even to those of us who are no longer youth!





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Noella Steinhauer, Glen Shaw and Evelyn Good Striker relax after presenting.

Focus On Aboriginal People Sub-Team

By **Carmen Parent**
Manager, Aboriginal Programs
Alberta Solicitor General

While the Aboriginal people in Alberta represent approximately 7% of the population, it is young compared with the overall population and is rapidly growing. These demographics, coupled with anticipated talent shortages, demonstrates the importance of developing creative strategies for targeting Aboriginal people as a potential labour market pool.

In response to this issue, a sub-team under the Ambassador Program was formed recently to undertake initiatives that will attract and retain Aboriginal people into the Alberta public service. The sub-team is comprised of members from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND), Energy, Personnel Administration Office, Children's Services and Solicitor General/Justice. The work of the Sub-Team supports the cross-ministry Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy and Aboriginal Policy Initiative.

The latest Alberta Labour Force Statistics released in December 2003, indicate that Aboriginal people living off-reserve are employed to a greater extent in sales/services and trades/transportation occupations more than in government occupations. In light of this fact, the sub-team has identified a number of strategies and initiatives to increase the profile of the

Alberta public service as an employer of choice for Aboriginal Albertans.

One such initiative is the participation of Aboriginal public service employees in local career fairs; particularly those with an Aboriginal focus such as the "Blueprint for the Future Aboriginal Youth Career Fair." In partnership with AAND, the sub-team identified a number of Aboriginal employees, from a variety of departments and occupations, to represent the Alberta public service at the career fair.

In addition to participating in local career fairs for all age groups, the sub-team is working towards identifying recruitment needs, existing programs and future plans of each Ministry in relation to attracting and retaining Aboriginal people. For example, some Ministries have a number of programs and initiatives that are geared towards Aboriginal people in Alberta and as such, may have a number of potential employment opportunities which Ambassadors could market to this population. Other Ministries offer scholarship or bursary programs for Aboriginal people who are pursuing careers in fields such as health and justice.

Aboriginal cultural awareness training for Ambassadors has been arranged to prepare them for their participation in outreach activities that involve Aboriginal people. All Ambassadors were recently sent an invitation to this professional development opportunity being held March 8th. In addition, the Alberta Justice/Alberta Solicitor General Staff College currently provides a three-day Aboriginal cultural awareness workshop to Solicitor General and Justice staff with a number of additional spaces available to staff from other Ministries. If you are interested in the three-day workshop, please contact Lenda Fisher at (780) 422-6598.

The Focus on Aboriginal People Sub-Team welcomes your ideas and suggestions on strategies for attracting and retaining Aboriginal people in the Alberta public service. For further information, contact Kerri Schlemko at (780) 408-8416 or Teresa Dumonceaux at (780) 427-6747.





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Looking Back At 2003/04

By **Kerri Schlemko**
Ambassador Program Coordinator
Alberta Personnel Administration Office

I mentioned earlier that Ambassadors have been active. Here's a snapshot of the initiatives we've been involved with over the past year:

- Participated in thirteen career fairs across the province;
- Guest speaker presentations at eleven targeted events;
- Ambassador sub-teams have formed to address specific areas, such as targeting a mid-career audience, targeting outreach activities for Aboriginal people, and professional development for Ambassadors to support them in their role;
- Organized Aboriginal cultural awareness training for Ambassadors;
- Opportunity to participate in a focus group to provide feedback on a draft discussion guide related to the work environment.

In addition to these, there have been many Ministry specific initiatives to tailor the Ambassador Program to their own recruitment needs and plans. Some examples are: developing marketing materials, mentoring students, job shadowing, orientation and planning sessions, focus groups with summer students, and a variety of guest speaking arrangements.

A big thank you to all Ambassadors for their participation over the past year.

We Want to Hear From You!

We're interested in your thoughts and ideas! If you have feedback on the newsletter, if you would like to become involved with the regular production of the newsletter, or if you have an article you would like to contribute, please contact kerri.schlemko@gov.ab.ca.





